

October 2009 / Tishrei 5770

WELCOME to the [MERCANZ-Canada](#) e-Letter. As we begin the New Year 5770, we wanted to contact all of members and supporters, to wish everyone a year of good health and happiness as well as peace and security for Israel.

[MERCANZ-Canada](#) is the Zionist membership organization of the Conservative Movement in Canada, the voice of Conservative Jewry within the World Zionist Organization (WZO), the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Canadian Zionist Federation. We work to support religious pluralism in Israel and strengthen the connection between Israel and the Diaspora.



[Marion Mayman, President MERCANZ-Canada reports](#)

MERCANZ USA MISSION TO ISRAEL

In June, I had the privilege of joining the **MERCANZ USA** mission to Israel. People on the mission included several Past National Presidents of Women's League, an active member of the Men's Club executive, the President of **MERCANZ USA**, Stephen Wolnek and his wife, the Executive Director of **MERCANZ USA**, Rabbi Robert Golub and Rabbi Jeffery Wohlberg, President of the Rabbinical Assembly - all of whom are on the **MERCANZ USA** Board. It was a fabulous mission as we visited a number of Masorti/Conservative kehillot and their Rabbis. I found the following to be the most interesting and invigorating:

- **Zichron Yaakov**

Rabbi Elisha Wolfin talked to us about the **TALI schools** which are very popular and well attended. There are seven in the immediate vicinity of Zichron. Ten years ago the parents objected to having any religious content. Today that is not the case. Parents want to engage in talk about spirituality. Rabbi Wolfin has introduced a vibrant study program at the kehilla which lasts a year, with four one-hour sessions per week which are open to the general community. He is trying to bring G-d back into the dialogue. He has the charisma to pull it off. If this kehilla did not have a Rabbi - even a part time one - this would not be happening. He is successfully reaching out to the community to educate them about Masorti Judaism.



(front row) Dr Stephen Wolnek (Pres MERCANZ USA), his wife Elysia Wolnek, Rabbi Jeffrey Wohlberg (Pres Rabbinical Assembly), Marion Mayman (Pres MERCANZ-Canada) Rabbi Elisha Wolfin of Zichron Yaakov.

- **Kibbutz Hannaton**

Recently Rabbi Yoav Ende, a dynamic and creative graduate of the NOAM youth movement and the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, was appointed Director of the Hannaton Educational Centre and Rabbi of the kibbutz.

On our visit to the Kibbutz, Rabbi Ende spoke so passionately about the plans for Kibbutz Hannaton that he reminded me of the pioneers in the early days of Israel. They are Israelis making aliyah, so to speak.

For more information about Kibbutz Hannaton go to <http://www.masortiworld.org/mercaz/hannaton> and to <http://www.masortiworld.org/mercaz/news5>



MERCAZ delegation at Kibbutz Hannaton with Rabbi Yoav Ende (4th from left) beside Marion Mayman

- **Ramat Zion in French Hill.** Their Rabbi is Chaya Rowen-Baker - a sabra who is a graduate of the Noam Youth Movement and the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary. For the last 3 years she and her husband and three young children have attended Camp Ramah in Canada. I mention Ramot Zion because I davened there on Shabbat and received my first ever Torah Aliyah, which was very meaningful to me.

VAAD HA'POEL AND JEWISH AGENCY MEETINGS

In June, I along with other delegates from MERCAZ Olami attended the Vaad HaPoel (working meetings of the World Zionist Organization) and JAFI (Jewish Agency for Israel) meetings which were held in Jerusalem. These were very important meetings for a variety of reasons: Natan Scharansky was elected Chairperson of the Jewish Agency and many resolutions were passed relating to the upcoming WZO Congress taking place in June 2010.

Please click here <http://www.masortiworld.org/mercaz/news4> to read a more detailed report of these meetings, by Rabbi Vernon Kurtz, President of MERCAZ Olami, including an extra link to review the resolutions.



(l-r) Norman Stern (Pres CZF), Marion Mayman (Pres [MERCAZ-Canada](#)), Adrian Korsner (Pres MERCAZ UK) voting for Resolutions at the Vaad Hapoel June 2009



Stephen Steckler (MERCAZ USA), Rabbi Vernon Kurtz (Pres MERCAZ Olami), Norman Stern (Pres CZF), Marion Mayman (Pres [MERCAZ-Canada](#)), Alan Silberman (Pres Masorti Olami), Rabbi Robert Golub (Ex.Dir. MERCAZ USA).

NEFESH B'NEFESH www.nbn.org.il

A few months ago Ari Schuchman, Assistant Director of Overseas Programs for Nefesh B' Nefesh visited Vancouver and I was able to set up a meeting with our three Conservative synagogues there as well as our three [MERCAZ-Canada](#) Board members, Rabbi Claudio Kaiser-Blueth (Beth Tikvah Congregation, Richmond, BC), Catherine Epstein (President, Beth Israel Congregation, Vancouver, BC) and Irv Nitkin (President Har El Congregation, WestVancouver).

To quote Rabbi Kaiser-Blueth " It was a very productive meeting with the presence of all the Conservative Rabbis of Vancouver and Richmond , and the presidents of

Beth Israel and Har El. The meeting was aimed at informing us of the mechanics of how the Conservative Synagogues and their Rabbis could be partners with Nefesh B' Nefesh. There was total agreement as to the need to join forces and share information of future candidates thinking about making aliyah."

Many thanks to Rabbi Claudio Kaiser-Blueth, Catherine Epstein and Irv Nitkin for organizing this very important meeting.

MATCHING SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ISRAEL TRIPS

[MERCAZ-Canada](#) offers Matching Scholarships to young people attending Conservative sponsored trips to Israel. We received the following letters and photos:

Canadian participants in NATIV 2009-2010 all year program in Israel:



(l-r) Miri Elmaleh, Anna Gol*, Beth Tikvah, Toronto, Laura Elman*, Beth Tzedec, Toronto, Ayelet Seed*, Adath Israel, Toronto.

*[MERCAZ-Canada](#) Scholarship Recipients

My Experience on USY Italy-Israel Pilgrimage

By Danielle Klein, Agudath Israel, Ottawa



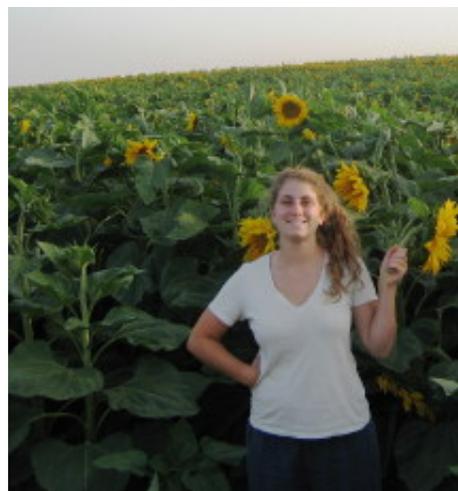
Danielle Klein (far left) and friends from Indiana & Nebraska on Masada.

This summer, I went on Italy-Israel Pilgrimage with USY. I was so excited to see all the most admired sights of Italy... I did get to see all these sights and more, but I did not anticipate that I would also get to see Italy from a unique point of view, namely the Jewish point of view! [Click here to read Danielle's wonderful article...](#)

My Experience on NATIV

by Leah Silverman, Agudath Israel, Ottawa

During this hectic High Holiday season I have been naturally compelled to reflect upon my experiences last year on the NATIV College Leadership Program and more specifically how I spent my chagim a year ago in Israel.... [Click here to read Leah's thoughtful article...](#)





Eric Marmur
Shaar Shalom, Thornhill
at the Tank Museum at Latrun
(he is right below the gun)

Mazal Tov ...

. . . to Dr. Hanan Alexander, who was elected to succeed Dr. Ismar Schorsch as Chair of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary Board. Dr. Alexander, ordained from the Jewish Theological Seminary, is Professor of Philosophy of Education at the University of Haifa where he heads the Center for Jewish Education and the International School for Overseas Students.

. . . to Rabbis Moshe Silberschein and Tamar Elad-Appelbaum, who were named as Dean and Associate Dean respectively of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary. Rabbi Silberschein, a veteran lecturer in rabbinical studies, was ordained from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rabbi Elad-Appelbaum, a graduate of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, has worked as a pulpit rabbi at the Masorti congregation in Omer and as a program director at the Masorti Movement's national office. She will serve next year as an interim assistant rabbi of Temple Israel Center in White Plains, NY.

. . . to Natan Sharansky, who was selected in June as the new Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive. Sharansky, the famed Jewish refusenik from the former Soviet Union who was first elected to the Knesset in 1996 a decade after being freed from the Soviet labor camp and arriving in Israel and who served as a minister in a succession of Israeli governments through 2005, succeeds Zeev Bielski who was elected to the Knesset in February.

Membership

As we approach the WZO Congress being held in June 2010, it is very important that we elect a full roster of delegates. To accomplish this, membership numbers are critical. We thank you for your membership and continued support and ask that you forward this newsletter to family and friends who are not already members. They may join by clicking onto the [MERCAZ-Canada](http://www.mercaz.ca) web site at www.mercaz.ca.

MORE MERCAZ MEMBERS = MORE VOTES IN WZO ELECTIONS = MORE FUNDING FOR MASORTI/CONSERVATIVE PROGRAMMES IN ISRAEL.

Join now!

Fill out this [online form](#)

If you are not already a member of [MERCAZ-Canada](http://www.mercaz.ca) through your voluntary check-off on your synagogue's dues statement, you need to join. We've made it easy. You can [join ONLINE by using this form](#). Membership is just \$18 per couple or \$9 for a single member over 18 years of age.

We need YOUR membership (only \$9/person or \$18/couple) to...

- Advance religious pluralism in Israel
- Offer matching scholarships to young people attending Conservative sponsored trips in Israel
- Expand allocations for the Conservative/Masorti Movement

- Support short and long-term Movement study programs in Israel
- Disseminate Zionist educational materials and programs.
- Promote Conservative Masorti Judaism throughout the world

Need more information?

Call MERCAZ-CANADA at 416-667-1717 or 1-866-357-3384 e-mail: info@mercaz.ca

MERCAZ-Canada

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